



ESTABLISHED 1877.—NEW SERIES.

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ON THE TECHE.

Soldiering Amid the Bayous of Louisiana.

"SOFT DUTY."

Veterans Taking Their Ease Amid the Orange Groves.

COURTING THE CREOLES.

The Bloody End of the Banks Expedition.

BY FRANK H. MASON AND JOHN W. FREY, 420 OHIO.

In obedience to the request of Comrade R. H. Martin we cheerfully resume our narrative of and glance briefly at the operations of Gen. Banks in the Teche Country, in Southwest Louisiana. We regret that we cannot accommodate the comrades interested, with an intelligent resume of the Red River campaign. Our data of that

DISASTROUS COTTON RAID are very meager; not sufficient, in fact, to justify an attempt to prepare a readable account of that expedition. Our brigade did not participate actively in the campaign, having proceeded only to Simmesport; meeting there the defeated army of Banks on its retreat to the Mississippi River. The remainder of the Thirteenth Corps, however, participated actively in the campaign, and were roughly handled at the disastrous battle of Sabine Cross-roads. Other comrades of the Thirteenth Corps are, therefore, more competent than we to write "Red River."

We stated in the last of the Vicksburg series that the Thirteenth Corps very reluctantly and with many regrets severed its pleasant relations with the Army of the Tennessee in August, 1863, and reported for duty to Gen. Banks at New Orleans. Osterhaus's Division embarked at Vicksburg on the 13th of August, and started down the river in splendid spirits. The great work of opening the Mississippi was now complete. Vicksburg and Port Hudson had surrendered to the prowess of the Federal armies, and we passed from the great river feeling that we had accomplished a great and important work.

ENCAMPING IN NEW ORLEANS. After a pleasant voyage the fleet reached New Orleans on the night of the 15th. The division debarked and marched to the pretty suburban village of Carrollton, four miles above, and in the rear of New Orleans, on the road to Lake Pontchartrain. Here, on a beautiful lawn, a clean, dry, and healthful spot, Osterhaus's war-worn Division encamped in luxurious style. Tents and camp equipage were in perfect order, and the troops, with no enemy to oppose, divided their time between drilling and exploring New Orleans. Luxuries of many kinds—fruits, fish, cakes, pies, etc.—were abundant and cheap, and the division, having been recently paid, "fared sumptuously every day." The pleasant episode at Carrollton lasted from the 15th of August until the 6th of September, when the division, leaving the sick and convalescent behind, moved to Brashear City, near the coast, about 100 miles southwest of New Orleans. Up to this time it had been expected that the next point of attack would be Mobile, and this was, indeed, Gen. Grant's intention; but the condition of Rosecrans in Tennessee induced the Government to recall the corps of Vicksburg to that important department, and the movement against Mobile was postponed. In its stead, the troops at New Orleans were headed towards Texas. Gen. Banks's Department west of the Mississippi had by this time lost all importance as a part of the rebellion to be crushed.

OBJECTS OF THE EXPEDITION. The fighting that should close the war was to be done east of the great river. But Louisiana and Texas were waiting in cotton, a heavy crop of sugar was ripening, and it was of the greatest importance that those States should be kept sufficiently under Federal control to permit the cotton and sugar to be gathered and marketed. For some purpose of this kind, or as a start toward Texas—we could never ascertain precisely which—the division, on the 6th of September, marched to the landing, and, leaving tents and knapsacks behind, took steamer and dropped down the river to Algiers, opposite the lower part of New Orleans, where the troops went on board trains on the New Orleans, Opelousas & Great Western Railroad at 4 o'clock p. m. and started westward. At 10 in the evening the trains stopped at Bayou Renf, 75 miles from New Orleans, and, in the absence of orders, the men remained on board the cars during the night. Next morning, the division having all arrived, the troops were unloaded and put into camp. The weather was excessively hot; and the water in the bayou was found to be salt. The tide in the stream rose and fell about two feet, and when it was out the men skirmished up and down the sand in an industrious and interesting hunt for crabs. They were plentiful, and the boys' haversacks were soon filled. The division, being wholly destitute of tents or camp equipage, bivouacked on a plantation near the railroad. Here it remained until the morning of the 11th, when it broke camp and marched 10 miles westward to Brashear City, the terminus of the railroad. The march was rendered especially trying by the excessive heat and want of water. The only reliance of the people for water was upon rain cisterns, and these, of course, could not be relied upon to supply a regiment, much less a division. Before reaching Brashear City many of the men, unable to endure their thirst,

RUSHED TO THE BRACKISH STREAMS that crossed the road and drank of the warm,

salt water. By this indiscretion many were rendered sick, and the road was strewn with stragglers unable to walk. They came up after sunset, however, and found the camp at Brashear City, on the large bayou, 25 miles in length, which connects Grand Lake with the Gulf. Here the difficulty about water was again encountered; but the men immediately dug holes in the sand, in which small quantities were collected, and this, with what could be obtained from cisterns and the oranges which grew abundantly everywhere, served to assuage their thirst. It was also discovered that a strong north wind filled the bayou with fresh water from the lake above, and the rare opportunity thus afforded was improved by filling all the tubs, barrels and mess kettles that could be mustered with the heaven-sent beverage. After 10 days spent in Camp Brashear heavy and continuous rains set in, and the troops, still without tents, were badly exposed. On the 27th, however, the tents arrived; but the rains continued until the camp was flooded. A few of the prudent ones, who always spend their leisure time in providing against emergencies, had built banks to sleep on, supported by stakes, several inches above the ground. As they lay in these they could hear their less fortunate comrades calling out, in imitation of the steamboat "leadman," "Two feet!" "Two and a half!" "Quarter less twain!" "No bottom!" The veteran volunteer had become a creature whose logical hilarity no misfortune could suppress.

OFF FOR OPELOUSAS. After more than two weeks spent at Brashear, the division set out, on Oct. 3, for Opelousas, 100 miles to the northwest. The country was overrun with Confederate guerrillas, but, having no mounted troops, we could neither pursue nor fight them advantageously. On the fourth day the column reached New Iberia, where the troops went into camp and remained until the 8th, when Gen. Ord arrived; the remaining three divisions of the Thirteenth Corps having been, as we learned, transferred to the Gulf Department. On the following day Sheldon's Brigade again moved forward, marching 20 miles during the day and encamping beyond Smithville. The Nineteenth Corps was in our front, skirmishing with the rebel force under Gen. Dick Taylor, and on the night of the 10th we passed some of the troops on picket. Apparently, therefore, we had come to re-enforce the army with which Gen. Banks was operating in the Teche Country. The 13th was the gubernatorial election day in Ohio, and after brigade and division inspection, the Ohio regiments, by the grace of their loyal Legislature, cast their patriotic vote for the Hon. John Brough, adding this note to the overwhelming majority of 191,101 under which their loyal State had buried the arch traitor, Clement L. Vallandigham. After remaining in camp till the 16th, the division again moved forward, and after two days' marching reached Opelousas. Osterhaus's Division encamped on the night of the 17th near Vermilionville, where it remained until the 23d, during which time the remainder of the Thirteenth Corps came up. After two days at Opelousas, the Thirteenth Corps was faced about and started back to Brashear City. There was no enemy of serious strength in that country, and the Nineteenth Corps was abundantly able for all defensive purposes.

After a rapid but pleasant march, Sheldon's Brigade reached its old camp at Berwick Plantation, opposite Brashear City, on the night of the 10th of November. The march to Opelousas and back, though involving some hardships, was in the main a pleasant one. The weather had become cool, with intervals of rain and sunshine, and the foraging was untroubled.

THE COUNTRY ALONG THE TECHE is a high rolling prairie, fertile, and swarming with cattle, ponies and hogs. The ponies were caught in great numbers, and the cattle and swine made fresh meat a daily luxury to officers and men. Enormous yams could be had for the digging, oranges grew along the road as plentifully as apples in Ohio, Indiana or Illinois, and poultry—well it was so abundant and cheap that the stale meat and inhabited crackers of the army rations remained untouched.

On the 25th of October, while on the return march, a party from the 19th and 42d Ohio had been out foraging, and while 12 men were at dinner at a sugar plantation, they were approached and captured by a squadron of rebel cavalry in Federal uniform. The infantry observed them coming, but supposing them to be Union cavalry of the Nineteenth Corps, permitted them to surround the house and get possession of their muskets stacked in the yard. This misfortune was the occasion of stringent orders, from which that group greatly resented foraging. After remaining at Camp Berwick until the 14th, Sheldon's Brigade (now including the 42d and 12th Ohio and the 7th and 22d Ky.) crossed to Brashear City. From this time to the close of this article we shall follow the fortunes of Sheldon's Brigade, the remainder of the Thirteenth Corps returning to New Orleans, whence a portion of it was sent to Texas via the Gulf. On the 19th Col. Sheldon was ordered to re-enforce Gen. Birge at Thibodaux. The brigade went by rail to that point, where it reported to Gen. Birge, debarked, and marched up Bayou Lafourche to Donaldsonville on the Mississippi, where it took steamer for Plaquemine, a town of 4,000 inhabitants, on the western shore of the river, 110 miles above New Orleans. While returning from Opelousas we had confidently expected to be dispatched from Brashear to Texas; in fact, orders had been issued to be ready to embark for Galveston as soon as transportation by sea could be procured.

PLAQUEMINE. The transfer to Plaquemine was so abrupt and hurried that it was evident the entire plan had been changed. A force of 4,000 or 5,000 of the enemy had appeared in the rich country west of Plaquemine, and it was found upon our arrival there that the brigade, with Col. Sheldon in command, had

been ordered to fortify Plaquemine and hold it as a base of operations during the winter. This announcement was hailed with delight. For more than two years we had been in the field, without a week of what was known in the army as "soft" duty. Not a man in the brigade had seen the inside of a barracks, or—with the exception of a few weeks' hard work—had it at any time formed a garrison of a permanent post. Always in the field, often without tents, we had learned to take life as it came, asking no questions.

Plaquemine was a clean, healthy, beautiful town; the people were intelligent and cordial, and the brigade settled down to a winter in the South with bright anticipations. The brigade now included, besides the infantry regiments named, the 2d Ohio and 1st Ind. batteries and a company of the 4th Wis. Cav. Immediately upon his arrival Col. Sheldon gained information that the enemy, 5,000 strong, under Gen. Walker, was raiding through the interior and threatening Plaquemine. An expedition was made to meet this enemy; but the autumn rains had set in, the plantations were flooded, artillery could not be moved, and even infantry was often obliged to leave the roads and travel along the levees that lined the bayous and inland creeks. Forty or 50 prisoners had been captured in this expedition, however, but finding that Walker was not seriously disposed to fight, Col. Sheldon settled his command down to the work of repairing the levee and fortifying the town. A bastioned earthwork with an area of two acres was built, with magazine, drawbridge, etc., and armed with 14 guns. The exterior slope and glacis were neatly turfed, and the work when completed made a very creditable appearance. All this was completed by the 1st of January. Meanwhile, considerable work of a miscellaneous character had been done. Our tents, left at Brashear City when we left for Opelousas, three months before, had been issued to other troops, and were permanently lost to us.

To supply their place, barracks were built at Plaquemine; old buildings in and around the town being torn down to furnish lumber for the purpose. A strict provost guard was organized, the most rigid garrison discipline established, and, with better acquaintance, the relations between the inhabitants and the garrison soon became intimate and cordial.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW-YEAR'S DAY passed off with great eclat—the third year's holidays we had taken in the field. What a twelvemonth of peril, adventure and victory since the last New-Year's night, when Gen. Sherman's army, repulsed and disheartened, was sinking away like a culprit from the miry swamp and bristling heights of Chickasaw! Could it be possible that only a year had passed since then? Among the inhabitants of Plaquemine was a French soldier of fortune, an adroit fencing-master and musician. He had been a band-master in a Confederate regiment, but when his band had been converted into soldiers, he had retired from service and returned to civil life. His French accomplishments and his Confederate service paved the way for his prompt admission to Plaquemine society, and, in the general dearth of young men, the young cavalier had monopolized the maiden sentiment of the place. The French gentleman gladly introduced his new friends of Sheldon's Brigade to the society belles of Plaquemine. Before midwinter the boys had well improved the rare opportunity thus offered, and Plaquemine society was ready to declare that it had no idea such refined and intelligent gentlemen could be found in the Yankee army.

The soldiers were dined and entertained, and young ladies who had sung the "Bonny Blue Flag," "Dixie," and "My Maryland" since Sumter fell, hid their blushes behind the argument that "These Ohio soldiers are not Yankees, but Western people like ourselves." Soon after setting down here, several literary gentlemen of the 42d Ohio took possession of a printing office and established and published weekly a six-column folio newspaper, with the very suggestive title of *The Picket Post*. It was devoted to military news, society gossip, wit, humor, and camp jokes. It was quite a spicy sheet, and was edited by the projectors of the enterprise by regular turn. When we left Plaquemine, on the 26th of March, 1864, the publication of the *Picket Post* was discontinued. We need scarcely add that the *Picket Post* enterprise did not ripen into a powerful newspaper monopoly.

The establishment of the post at Plaquemine had created a mart where the people of a rich district, long shut out from every market by the blockade and military regulations, could sell their products for the luxuries and necessities of life. The coming of the troops, so far from an affliction, therefore, had been an emancipation; and while the maidens and the soldiers wooed and sighed, the town rose to new prosperity and importance. Spring set in after the middle of February, and by the 1st of March peach trees and roses were in bloom, and the roads as dry and fine as in June.

The two Kentucky regiments and the cavalry had been transferred to Baton Rouge on the 27th of January, and the garrison was thereby reduced to the Ohio troops and the artillery. On the 26th a steamer came up from New Orleans bearing our old comrades and friends of Foster's battery, bound for Red River. That famous campaign was then in motion. On the same day the 120th and 42d received the first outfit of dress coats that had been issued to them since enlistment. After two and a half years of service, and just as we were about to take the field for the last campaign, we received the uniforms, that could be of no possible advantage and only an encumbrance on the march. There was a theory in the army that soldiers' laziness always came in that awkward way. We were under orders for Baton Rouge. We must bid adieu to Plaquemine with all its pleasant associations. On the 26th of March the 42d and 120th, bright and neat in their new uniforms, marched down through the town and took the steamer for Baton Rouge. The farewell

was an ovation to the regiments. Citizens of all ages, colors, and of both sexes, crowded along the line of march to wish the departing braves Godspeed.

THE YOUNG LADIES WERE INCONSOLABLE, and wept and waved their handkerchiefs as their cavaliers marched away. An irreverent scoffer, who drove a mule team, said that the scene was entitled to a place in poetry beside that of "The Last Sign of the Moor."

We said at the outset of this article that our brigade had gone no further up Red River than to Simmesport. We were partially in error. The 120th Ohio, or a part of it, advanced as far as Alexandria. About the 1st of May Col. Sheldon was ordered with his brigade from Baton Rouge to Alexandria, the center and base of Gen. Banks's operations.

He sent the 120th Ohio by the only steamer that could be secured on the 2d of May; but when the steamer City Belle, with that regiment on board, approached Suagg Point, within 20 miles of Alexandria, a TERRIFIC FLOOD was opened upon it by a battery behind the levee; the boat was disabled, and the brave men—who were at a fearful disadvantage, crowded upon the decks of the boat—were slaughtered like sheep. The regiment returned a vigorous fire, but the odds were too great. In the meantime a brigade of infantry had joined the artillery in a deadly fusillade upon them. Of the entire regiment but a hundred men escaped death or capture. Col. Marcus M. Spiegel, of the 120th, and Col. Mudd, of the 2d Ill. Cav., were among the slain. The 90 or 100 men who escaped by landing on the opposite side of the river were conducted to Alexandria by an unrequited route in the night by a trusty and loyal negro. Lieut. Col. Willard Slocum was in command of the fragment of that regiment; those who were captured were conducted by the rebels to prison at Camp Ford, Tex., where they languished for more than a year. On the following day a transport having on board the 56th Ohio veterans bound for home, was attacked at the same place, the boat sunk, and the regiment nearly all killed or captured. Seventy men swam to the opposite shore, marched down the river several miles, hailed a boat bound up the river, boarded and turned her back to Baton Rouge in time to meet a steamer bearing the 42d and save us from a similar fate. As already stated, we proceeded to Simmesport and assisted in covering the retreating army. At Simmesport three regiments—the 34th Ill., the 23d and 22d Iowa—were added to the brigade, which set to work to construct bridges across the Atchafalaya Bayou for the passage of Banks's army, the rear of which, under the invincible A. J. Smith, was fighting Kibby's advance force at Yellow Bayou. Two bridges were constructed—one of timbers and planks resting on wooden cribs; the other by mooring transports alongside of each other and laying a roadway across their forecables. Hardly were they completed when the retreating army appeared and began marching across. The transit occupied several hours, Smith's Division, the rear-guard, coming up, weary and powder-stained, crossed after dark. The 42d was in charge of the bridges, and as three divisions of the Thirteenth Corps passed, many useful greetings were exchanged. Before the last regiment had reached the eastern shore both bridges were loosened at the western end and swung out into the stream. The steamers were loaded with wounded and exhausted men. Both the column and the steamers made their way to the Mississippi with all speed. Thus ended the Red River venture.

FOR THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE. THE GENERAL. [By Col. John A. Joyce.] Give him an organ and let him play— He's only a general, and he's not a play. Yet, he's captured a host of the "gray," And broke up their roaring camp.

Donelson, Shiloh and Vicksburg, too, He's done his great work here. But then, you see, he fought for the "blue," And now he's put on the town.

Please, mister, a penny or so, I'm crippled, and poor, and old. I've won a couple of hundred and three, And weary, and sad, and cold.

The "Bonny Blue Flag," did you say? No! my organ can't play that; I'd rather throw it away, And trust to passing my hat.

"Move on," "move on," get out of the way, All your tunes are obsolete. I know you conquered the "boys in gray," But now you are in retreat!

Yes, it seems that my job is great. I won these medals for the crumbling State, And led all the loyal blue.

My country, for thee I fought and bled, And your loud trumpet of war I heard. Shall sound my glory, alive or dead, And boast of my military name.

And when I'm dead you'll read on high A monument proud and grand. Under the blue of one for the "gray," The gift of my native land.

But now, to-day, while I'm old and gray, And suffer the dearest sorrow, You let me sing with a downcast eye, And beg my bread for to-morrow!

BETTER LUCK ANOTHER YEAR. Oh! never sink "neath Fortune's frown, But brave her with a shout of cheer, And from her fairly—face her down— Her's only stern to those who fear!" Here's "Better luck another year!" Another year!

Aye, better luck another year! We'll have her smile instead of sneer— A thousand smiles for every tear, With home made glad and goodly cheer, And better luck another year! Another year!

The dandelion Fortune still denies The plea that yet delights her ear; She's got to those who doubt and fear, She'll grant the suit another year! Another year!

Here's "Better luck another year!" She now denies the golden prize; But spite of frown and scorn and sneer, We'll have her smile instead of sneer, With home made glad and goodly cheer, In better luck another year! Another year!

Where is Col. Campbell? TO THE EDITOR: I have read your paper a long time to see if I could get some clue to Col. Campbell, of the 57th Pa. I have not heard from him since I helped him off the battlefield at Fair Oaks. He was wounded through the hip, and I was wounded at the same time. I was a private in Co. H, 57th Pa. I would like to hear from him. JOHN GIFFIN, Athens, Pa.

MOSCOW, TENN.

The Bloody Little Battle on the Banks of Wolf River.

GALLANT CAVALRYMEN.

Gen. Edward Hatch's Account of the Engagement.

REPULSE OF THE REBELS.

A Victory which Saved the Railroad and Memphis.

TO THE EDITOR: Inclosed please find Col. Edward Hatch's statement of the battle of Moscow, Tenn., Dec. 4, 1863, which you will do me the favor to publish in full. It must certainly end any further controversy between those parties who have taken exception to my description of said battle published in No. 154, July 24 last. Hatch's letter fully corroborates my statement, and I feel proud of it; for I have no intention of misrepresenting anything relating to the war that I may send you for publication. I stand ready and willing to be corrected. A true history of the war is what we want, and the only way in which it is to be obtained is through the memory and memoranda of those who participated in it; and where can we find a more generous friend than THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE to submit our differences of opinion to? It debar us from presenting their views and furnishing truth for the unborn millions to read after you and I, dear comrades, have passed over the river beyond, whence there is no return. R. W. SURRY. Battle Creek, Mich.

PORT RILEY, KAN., Dec. 16, 1884. DEAR SIR: From your letter it seems that you are still fighting the battles of the rebellion.

In answer to your questions, as safely as human memory can do so, which after 20 years is burdened with the weakness of such a period, I write you as follows:

1. The enemy had thrown out a squadron early in the morning of the 4th of December from their lines two miles south of La Grange, Tenn., towards Moscow, which came in contact with Col. Kendrick's pickets at the bridge, resulting in a skirmish.

2. The first regiment to cross the bridge at Wolf River was the 6th Ill. Cav., followed by the 7th (these regiments had the Illinois battery with them), followed by the 9th Ill. Cav., with Cameron's battery, and some other regiment (I have forgotten the number); the last, the 2d Iowa Cav., with Reed's howitzer battery.

3. I was wounded some time after the 2d Iowa went into action. I continued to direct the troops through Belden, my Adjutant-General, and Aid, Capt. Metcalf. When first shot through the body I sent for Kendrick and turned the command over to him, supposing I had but a few moments to live. When Capt. Metcalf informed me he [Kendrick] was about ordering the troops to withdraw to the right side of the bridge, on the Moscow side, which I was opposed to, I sent word to him that I again assumed command. Up to that time hemorrhage from my lungs had been very severe. I was then put in an ambulance and started for the left flank of my own troops to put in action the infantry coming up from Mower's Brigade.

4. I continued to give orders up to the time the enemy broke.

5. While wounded was in an ambulance. Did not leave the field until the enemy was running. My last order was sent to Lieut. Col. Traflet, of the 7th Ill. Cav., to take command of the cavalry and to push the enemy on his retreat.

6. My commission was that of Colonel of volunteers.

7. Kendrick's (colored) regiment was a good one, well officered; could and would have held out as long as any; could not have resisted longer than a day at Moscow before the force brought up by the Confederates.

As there has been some controversy in this matter—why, I don't know, for all the TROOPS ENGAGED BEHAVED SPLENDIDLY—as to certain things connected with the action, (why the fight was made on the enemy's side of the river against such apparent odds, for instance,) I will endeavor, so far as my memory assists me, to give the reasons.

If you will go back two weeks before, you will remember we were scouting in West Tennessee, under orders to break up Confederate organizations, destroy grist mills, etc. This order came from Gen. Hurlbut, who had learned that Forrest was to be in West Tennessee with a small force, for a nucleus, to gather up bands of deserters and obtain recruits. Gen. Hurlbut's information was obtained from the secret service. It seems our movement was too early for Forrest's advent, who had declined going there without support. This led to the movement of all the Confederate cavalry south of us under Lee.

enemy's line was drawn up, their left resting on the railroad cuts. If you remember, the 7th Ill. was one of the two regiments sent forward on our left to turn the enemy's right, both our own and the enemy's batteries opening. The main line advanced, when the enemy broke, retreating rapidly south and west, probably from the fact that he had seen the advance of Mower's infantry, or from an attack made by the 1st and 2d West Tenn. Cav., (whom I had ordered to join me from La Grange, they being part of my command,) who attacked the Confederates in the rear, upon the large open plain south of Salisbury. We discovered the enemy were at least 7,000 strong.

At daylight the morning of the 4th we were skirmishing with the enemy south of La Grange up to about 10 o'clock, when a dispatch from Kendrick announced that his pickets at the Wolf River Bridge were engaged. I was satisfied that this appearance of the enemy south of La Grange was merely for the purpose of holding the infantry until they could destroy the important railroad bridge over Wolf River, which was guarded by Col. Kendrick's infantry regiment, quartered in a strong redoubt with a 64-pounder. If this bridge was destroyed it would prevent the infantry of our command moving west to protect the small outposts, which could thus be easily captured, and even Memphis attacked. The inside line, which we held, was only 10 miles to Moscow—the enemy's route 15 miles. I at once started regiments as they could be reached for Moscow. The 6th and 7th Ill. were first. Then Gen. Grierson, who saw at once we were right, as he was really the commander of the Cavalry Corps, ordered me to push forward at once, and informed me that he would remain and induce Gen. Tuttle to send to our support a brigade of infantry; which he did—though it did not arrive in time to participate in the action.

The fact that we were to be supported by infantry prompted me, instead of making a defensive fight, to promptly take the offensive, and so punish Lee that he would abandon operations in our front. Maj. Whitely, of the 6th Ill., was hurried forward by the 7th, to cross the river at Wolf River Bridge and obtain a lodgment on the heights beyond. If he could not hold his ground he was to fall back on Kendrick's fort.

My own arrival was just in the rear of the 7th; the 6th, finding the planks of the bridge taken up by Kendrick, put them down and then crossed. The 6th and 7th were in action when I came up. The 9th Ill. shortly went into action with Cameron's battery. Kendrick's guns covered our right well and were admirably served. One wing of the colored regiment was brought into action. About the time, while I mounted, near the guns of Cameron's battery, I was badly

SHOT THROUGH THE BODY and arm, and my shoulder hurt. The 2d Iowa was then just going into action. At first I turned over the command, then resumed it. By that time an ambulance, which had been used in taking wounded to the rear, came near the lines. Leaving Belden, who was a capable Adjutant, to adjust the troops engaged, (knowing he had excellent staying qualities,) Capt. Metcalf placed me in the ambulance, to go to a ford on the river above our left. Meeting the Tennessee regiments, they were ordered to cross the ford and take the enemy in reverse.

The fight then was becoming serious. The enemy, MAKING DESPERATE CHARGES to possess themselves of the bridge, fell back disheartened. For a moment it was evident the firing was from our own troops and that Traflet was changing. Capt. Metcalf was sent forward to Belden to order Col. Traflet to push them with every available man, and nobly he did it. The enemy were many miles away that night and Traflet with the cavalry in pursuit.

LEE RELINQUISHED FURTHER EFFORTS, retreating south rapidly. Everybody who has written upon this affair seems to have written of what was immediately his impression. The men fought admirably. From the first all seemed determined to get at close quarters—even the batteries were served almost within pistol shot. The wing of Kendrick's colored regiment behaved as well as any of the troops I saw there.

If we had fought the action on the Moscow side of the river it would have simply resulted in defending our position. Gen. Lee could have left a few troops to guard the river and gone where he pleased. The very AUDACITY OF THE MOVEMENT paralyzed all future movements on my communications by his command. I knew my command well enough to know I could take them in anywhere and come out without being demoralized. It will be long before you or I see such troops as these men were at the end of two years' campaigning.

I have kept you rather long, but as there has been so much said about the affair, I give you all the particulars. Very truly, yours, EDWARD HATCH, Brevet Major-General.

TO A FACE AT A CONCERT. When the low music makes a dusk of sound About us, and the viol or the horn Swells out above it like a wind from heaven, That wanders seeking something never found, What phantom in your brain, on what dim ground, Traces its shadowy lines? What vision born Of fulfillment, fades in mere self-sown? Or grows, from that still twilight stealing round? When the lids drop and the hands lie unstrung, There one divine your dream, while the chords weave Their cloudy web from key to key, and die— Is it one fate that, since the world was young, Has followed man, and makes him half believe The voice of instruments is human cry? —E. R. Sill in the Century.

The Best History. TO THE EDITOR: I have five children going to school. Three of them are studying history, and I consider THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE the best history of the late war that the young scholars of to-day can study. The articles of Gen. Howard and "Carleton" give the unvarnished truth. My children are better posted on the late war (so far as THE TRIBUNE has got in its reports) than some men that I have met.—F. M. Adams, Napoleon, Ohio.

SAVING THE NATION.

The Story of the War Retold for Our Boys and Girls.

CONFEDERATE STRATEGY.

An Intercepted Letter Spoils the Rebels' Scheme.

GEN. PECK'S SKILL.

Norfolk Saved—Longstreet Goes to Join Lee.

BY "CARLETON."

TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS OF THE UNITED STATES: In February, 1863, the Confederate Government planned a movement from which great results were expected. Very little has been written about it. The Union troops who took part in defeating the movement never have had proper recognition from historians. But, before describing it, let us look at the position of the Union and Confederate armies. Hooker is at Falmouth, Lee at Fredericksburg. There is a Union force at Suffolk and Norfolk in Virginia; there are troops in North and South Carolina.

The United States Government is a government of the people, and those who are called upon to direct affairs must give heed in some degree to the demands of the people, if they would retain their confidence, and they are at times compelled to go contrary to their own judgment. It was frequently the case during the war.

From the day when the flag was lowered over Fort Sumter, the people of the North had determined that it should float again in triumph upon the spot where it had been dishonored. There was a determination that Charleston, where the war had been inaugurated, should once more bow to the authority of the Government. A fleet of ironclad war-ships and monitors was constructed for that purpose, and a great deal of energy, money, and life was wasted in the injudicious efforts to retake Sumter, but the newspapers, public speakers, on the platform and in Congress, were ever saying, "Sumter must be ours."

TROOPS SENT TO SOUTH CAROLINA. The officers managing affairs in Washington, to satisfy the public outcry, sent nearly all the troops in North Carolina—12,000 men—to South Carolina. It was a great mistake. They could do very little good there. They could not get at Sumter, nor up to Charleston. They were in a position in North Carolina to be of great service in cutting the railroad leading south from Richmond. The climate of North Carolina was healthy, that of the Sea Islands malarious. By sending so many men away, Gen. Foster, commanding in North Carolina, could make no movement; he would have all he could do to hold his own.

Coming north from Albemarle Sound, through the Dismal Swamp Canal, 50 miles, brings us to Suffolk, on the Nansemond River, where Gen. Peck was stationed with several thousand Union troops. Seventeen miles northeast brings us to Norfolk, where we find more troops under Gen. Keyes. The presence of these troops at Norfolk and Suffolk was a constant menace to Richmond. Now that the Merrimack was destroyed, the Union gunboats could ascend the James, almost to Richmond, and some morning people in the Confederate capital might find a large army knocking for entrance south of the city. If Suffolk could be recaptured, if the Union troops in North Carolina could be driven out, a great advantage would be gained.

THE PLAN. When Gen. Lee, in February, 1863, learned through his spies that Gen. Hooker was allowing his soldiers to go home to cure them of homesickness, he rightly surmised that no immediate movement would be attempted by the Army of the Potomac. The Confederate Government determined to improve the opportunity to sweep the troops in Eastern Virginia and North Carolina into the sea. They would conceal their real design. They sent D. H. Hill to North Carolina. The Governor called out the militia. He was to make a demonstration against Gen. Foster, who in turn would be compelled to ask Gen. Keyes to send him reinforcements, which would weaken the force at Suffolk and Norfolk.

While this was going on, Hood's, Pickett's and Anderson's Divisions, commanded by Longstreet, were to be transferred by railroad to Suffolk, carry that position, and then push on to Norfolk. Hill was suddenly to disappear from North Carolina and join his troops to Longstreet, and the united force would make clean war. Once more masters of Norfolk, they would make it uncomfortable for the Union fleet off Fortress Monroe, and would again close James River, HILL'S MOVEMENTS.

Gen. Foster, to strengthen his position at New Berne, was constructing Fort Anderson, on the banks of the Neuse River. On March 13 Gen. Pettigrew came down a road through the woods with two brigades of North Carolina troops. There was only a small garrison in the fort, but there were two gunboats in the river—the Hunchback and Hetzel, which opened fire, and the Confederates hastily retreated.

Twenty miles north of New Berne is the little town of Washington, on Tar River, which Gen. Hill attacked to capture the supplies stored there for the Union gunboats. It was occupied only by a small garrison. There were two gunboats in the river. Gen. Hill placed his cannon on the north bank to prevent any more vessels from arriving. But the Confederates ran past the batteries and brought a supply of ammunition. Gen.